European aquaculture is mainly composed of 3 large sectors, with different characteristics: shellfish, freshwater fish and marine fish farming. Crustaceans and algae are also grown in the EU, but their production is marginal so far.

1. **SHELLFISH FARMING**

1.1. **Oyster farming**

The bulk of oyster production is the cupped or Pacific oyster, *Crassostrea gigas*, which was introduced into Europe in the past 50 years. Native European flat oysters are now produced only in small quantities, since the introduction from the Americas of a protozoan parasite in the late 1970s which significantly affected most flat oyster growing regions of Europe, including France, Spain, the Netherlands, Ireland and the UK.

Juvenile oysters are either collected in the wild or are grown in hatcheries and production takes place via bottom culture on inshore beds with firm substrates or via rack culture where oysters are grown in plastic mesh containers on metal trestles or racks. In France a special treatment ("affinage") may be carried out in ponds ("claires") for the supply of top quality oysters.

Total oyster production for EU27 was 130199 tonnes in 2004 valued at €295 million. Largely dominated by France, which is also the largest market for oysters, Community production of cupped oysters peaked at 142730 tonnes in 1999 but subsequently significantly decreased. In some part of the Community, for example Ireland, cupped oyster production is smaller but registered an increase in production to 12,089 tonnes in 2005 (nearly six times the 1995 level). Irish production of flat oysters was 1708 tonnes in 2005 compared with 1412 tonnes in 1995. The native oyster obtains a higher price on the market and many producers mourn the fact that stocks have been decimated.

1.2. **Mussel farming**

In the Community today there are three types of mussel farming. The largest volume is cultured on ropes suspended from rafts or long lines as in Galicia in Spain and on the east coast of Italy and to a lesser extent in France, the West of Ireland and the UK (West of Scotland). Bottom culture, where vessels are used to relay seed mussels in suitable grow out sites, is used in the Netherlands, Ireland and in the UK (Wales). "Bouchot" culture is a

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1 Most of the data referred to in this document are based on the EUROSTAT official statistical data available up to 2004. Some other sources have also been used and quoted, in particular with respect to more recent data. Data from different sources may sometime lead to some discrepancies and any comparison should be made with caution.

2 For the purpose of comparison of data and trends over time, any indication in this document to EU-27 refers to the information available for all present 27 EU Member States, even though some of these Member States were not part of the EU at the date referred to.

3 Source BIM: Status of Irish Aquaculture 2005
method used in France using a series of wooden poles as supports. Young mussels are transplanted onto these poles for on-growing.

Total Community mussel production (EU-27) increased from 367518 tonnes valued at €210 million in 1993 to 589952 tonnes valued at €383 million in 2004. The top producers are Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and France. The level of production has declined in the last ten years in the Netherlands due to a shortage of seed supplies. Access to wild seed for cultivation has been restricted over concerns regarding the impact of seed mussel collection on the availability of food for wild birds. There is also competition for access to collection grounds due to hydrocarbon extraction in the northern part of the Netherlands. New mussel industries have developed in recent years in Greece, Ireland, the UK and Sweden. The oyster and mussel production sectors have been affected by increasingly frequent biotoxin closures linked to algal blooms. There is also an ongoing problem of access to waters free from microbiological contamination of human or animal origin.

1.3. Other shellfish

The "other shellfish" sector is made up of clams, scallops, abalone and sea urchins. The Japanese or Manila clam *Ruditapes philippinarum*, is now the lead species in the Community. Total clam production in 1997 was 49670 tonnes, valued at €149 million, of which Italy accounted for 80%, Spain 11% and Portugal 7% with smaller quantities grown in France, Ireland and the UK4. Italian production grew to 50000 tonnes in 1999 but had dropped to 27737 tonnes by 2003,5 (Facts and figures on the CFP). The clams are grown in the open in shallow areas with fine sediments principally in the Po Delta area. In other Member States cultivation generally takes place in the inter-tidal zone under mesh covering to protect it from birds. Growth of the clam cultivation using this method has been slower than anticipated. Production of other shellfish in this category is very small at the present time but there are some hopes that production can grow in future as there is a good market for these species.

2. Fresh-water-fish farming in lakes, ponds or basins

European aquaculture production is dominated by farming of trout, carp, and some other species in smaller amounts.

2.1. Trout: an intensive but high quality heavy water use product.

Trout production is spread throughout Europe and fresh trout can be bought everywhere. Because of its growth requirements and production performance, rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) largely dominates European trout production (approximately 95% of the total production).

Almost every Member State has trout farms. Most of them are near to rivers, and use concrete basins or ponds. Some lake cages are also in use. Approximately 220,000 tonnes of portion-size trout are produced and marketed within Europe each year, 85% are produced in the EU (the main producers are Italy and France, followed by Denmark, Germany and Spain). The only big producer of portion trout outside the EU is Turkey.

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4 Source: *Forward study of Community Aquaculture, MacAlister Elliot and Partners Ltd, Sept 99.*
5 Source: *Facts and figures on the CFP- Basic data on the Common Fishereis Policy- Edition 2006*
After many years of slow but steady increase, in the period 2000-2005 the production of portion trout fell slightly (approximately minus 0.6% per year)\(^6\), but prices remained good.

Larger size trout over 1 kg are mostly destined for filleting or smoking, but there is also a market for the whole fish, fresh and gutted. Most large trout are portion-size trout spawned and grown in fresh water, then transferred to sea-cages to become large trout. However in some countries the entire cycle to produce Large Trout is carried out in fresh water.

The production of Large Trout in Europe grew regularly from 1998 (where it was 94000 tonnes) to 2002 when it reached 144000 tonnes. The EU produced approximately 40% of total European production of Large Trout. However, Norway alone produces more than the whole EU.

Norwegian and Faroese production collapsed after 2003 (following the imposition of a 20% duty on imports of this fish into the EU). In 2005, production was approximately 100000 tonnes.

2.2. Extensive or semi-extensive aquaculture: carp and associated species.

The total EU production of carps, which is estimated at 72000 tonnes in 2006\(^7\) is largely dominated by the Common carp (Cyprinus carpio) (over 90%). The main areas for EU production are in Central Europe (Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Germany being the biggest producers) where the fish is mostly produced in ponds using traditional extensive or semi-intensive techniques.

In addition, the extensive polyculture techniques practised in carp ponds also allow simultaneous production of other freshwater species such as pike, pike-perch, perch, eels, tench and other small Cyprinids.

Statistics on carp production may not be fully reliable, but the trend over the last six years in the EU is towards a fall in total volumes, in particular in Austria and Poland, but good results in terms of prices with a certain tendency to an increase. On the European continent, non EU "carp" production is almost 145,000 tonnes/year, the common carp and the silver carp being by far the most frequently farmed species. The main producers are the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

The carp group is by far and away the largest fish production in aquaculture on a world scale. 2005 world production was around 19, 5 million tonnes, mostly in Asia\(^8\).

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\(^6\) Source: FEAP - Aquaculture Production, AQUAMEDIA 2007
\(^7\) Source: FEAP - Aquaculture Production, AQUAMEDIA 2007
\(^8\) Source: FAO Fishstat.
2.3. **Intensive aquaculture in closed systems with water recirculation: Eels and other species**

Eel is farmed in intensive systems in the Netherlands, Denmark and Italy. Dutch and Danish farmers use closed water recirculation systems, while in Italy farms are more traditional, with concrete basins and flow-through of water. The ancient form of extensive farming in Italian lagoons has almost completely disappeared.

EU production was around 11,000 tonnes/years until 2001, and then it went down to approximately 8500 tonnes/year from 2002 and has stabilized overall since. But this figure hides major shifts among the main producers; Italian production (once the biggest EU producer) is on a constant downward trend since the late 90's, and Danish production also went down after 2001. These losses have been partially compensated by some increase in Dutch production. However, because of the uncertain supply of young eels, some eel farmers switch production to other species or simply abandon the sector.

Non-European fresh water species, such as Tilapia, catfish and sturgeon are also being produced. Although production amounts as yet marginal compared to trout or carp, the high technology and innovation level of these farms appears highly attractive.

### 3. Marine Finfish Farming

#### 3.1. Atlantic Salmon

The expansion in output from Atlantic salmon farming has continued over the past 30 years. The Community industry began to develop from the late 1970s onwards. The UK (West of Scotland) and Ireland (West coast) are the main EU producers. Estimated 2006 production was 128,000 tonnes in the UK and 15,000 tonnes in Ireland (although their production peaked in 2003 and 2002 respectively).

Norway remains the dominant world player in salmon farming. Norwegian production reached its highest level in 2006 (597,000 tonnes), whereas other producers of Atlantic salmon in Europe are Iceland and the Faroe Islands. Outside Europe the species is grown in Chile (estimated 371,000 tonnes in 2006), and to a lesser extend in Canada, Australia and USA.

The industry cycle is now regarded as mature and salmon is the sector of European aquaculture which is most subject to globalisation and concentration of ownership. The top seven companies are responsible for 38% of Norwegian production. Six companies are responsible for 66% of UK production. Several European companies are also significant producers in Chile and Canada. Production has tended to surge ahead of market demand periodically.

There are still major environmental bottlenecks for salmon farming to deal with (sealice, escape of farmed fish).

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9 All statistics from Kontali Monthly Salmon Report, January 07.
3.2. Seabass and seabream

The development of seabream and seabass aquaculture in Greece was probably the biggest success story of the entire EU aquaculture sector; in the decade 1990-99 the average yearly increase in production was nearly 70%, raising Greek output from 3,550 tonnes in 1990 to 57,250 tonnes in 1999.\(^\text{10}\)

The production of both species continued to increase in the following years almost everywhere, to reach 181,000 tones in 2002. Greece was by far the most significant producer accounting for 57% of all production in 2002, with 44000 tones of seabass and 59000 tones of seabream.\(^\text{11}\)

The high production volumes reached by 2001-2002 led to a major confusion in EU markets for seabass and seabream, with a collapse in prices. The main cause of the price crisis was the imbalance between supply and demand caused by rapid and uncontrolled production growth, without proper planning, market support or promotion, particularly in Greece where some Greek enterprises went bankrupt. Since then, seabream and seabass production has remained stable overall during 2003 and 2004 in Greece, while moderate growth occurred in most other countries. By 2005, production again took off strongly almost everywhere. Spain is an interesting example; with its moderate but regular yearly increase, this Member State is the only European producer which has constantly increased production since 1990.

Despite some ups and downs, average prices for these species have risen during recent years, with good price levels attained in 2006. Production is so far still on the increase.

3.3. Tuna farming.

The activity of blue tin tuna fattening started in the early 1990s in the Mediterranean and the market opportunities opened up by this practice has led to its continued increase ever since (EU, Turkey, Tunisia, Libya, Croatia, Morocco…). Although there has been some recent research results on tuna reproduction,\(^\text{12}\) this new sector of aquaculture is still only based on the capture of wild fish, including juveniles. Moreover, it has not yet been possible to adapt these caught wild fish to industrial pellet feeding, and fattening is performed using raw wild fish as feed. In the EU the number and capacity of tuna cages increased from 25 farms in 2003 to 37 farms in 2007 (Spain, Malta, Cyprus, Italy, Greece, and Portugal).

The development of tuna fattening has been an additional driver to excessive fishing pressure on wild stocks. Faced with this situation, the International Commission on the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) recently adopted some measures aimed at better controlling these fattening activities.\(^\text{13}\) The reduction in catches foreseen in the blue-fin tuna recovery plan might have a consequence on farming, as there will be less fish available for farming activities. The possible limitation in tuna farms capacity might be discussed in an ICCAT working group meeting planned for July 2007.

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10 FAO Fishstat.
12 Cf FP5 Research project REPRODOT for example
13 Source ICCAT. See also ICCAT recommendation 06-07 on blue-fin tuna farming and ICCAT recommendation 06-05 to establish a Multi-annual Recovery plan for blue-fin tuna
3.4. **Other marine fish**

Intensive water recirculation systems have been used for a number of years now to produce high value species like turbot (or other flat fish). Farms are usually located close to markets. Overall production in Europe remains limited but seems to be growing.
**EU aquaculture and World aquaculture production: Some figures and illustrations**

Data referred to above originate from different sources and may not necessarily be exactly comparable. The tables and figures below are extracted from official Eurostat datasets.

### Aquaculture production in the European Union (EU-27) - Quantities (tonnes live weight)

**Source:** Eurostat

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* Finfish is the aggregate for Freshwater, Diadromous and Marine fish

** Considering the main production methods for diadromous species farmed in the EU, data on Atlantic Salmon has been considered under "Marine" fish, while data for all other diadromous species, in particular the most important such as rainbow trout and eels, have been included under "Freshwater" fish.

NA: not available
## Global Aquaculture production - Quantities (tonnes live weight)

Source: Eurostat

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<td>1,132.994</td>
<td>1,244.637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gillhead seabream</strong></td>
<td>13.032</td>
<td>20.570</td>
<td>24.466</td>
<td>33.198</td>
<td>41.472</td>
<td>54.388</td>
<td>67.204</td>
<td>87.288</td>
<td>82.152</td>
<td>77.343</td>
<td>95.263</td>
<td>90.995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>European seabass</strong></td>
<td>13.653</td>
<td>14.863</td>
<td>19.475</td>
<td>21.095</td>
<td>27.517</td>
<td>35.129</td>
<td>41.883</td>
<td>52.802</td>
<td>44.824</td>
<td>43.778</td>
<td>52.711</td>
<td>49.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Atlantic bluefin tuna</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1.959</td>
<td>3.346</td>
<td>3.682</td>
<td>4.446</td>
<td>4.917</td>
<td>3.941</td>
<td>6.958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Finfish is the aggregate for Freshwater, Marine and Diadromous fish

** For better comparison purpose with EU data sets above, data on rainbow trout and "river eels" have been added to the "Freshwater fish" aggregate and Atlantic Salmon has been considered under "Marine fish". Other Diadromous species not farmed in Europe are not included in total fresh water fish neither under Marine fish.
Evolution of the total aquaculture production in EU-27 and in the World
(reference year 1995: Index based on quantity produced)

Evolution of EU aquaculture production (total tonnage)
(reference year 1995: Index based on quantity produced)
Evolution of EU mollusc production
(total tonnage)

Evolution of EU mollusc production
(reference year 1995: Index based on quantity produced)

Evolution of EU freshwater fish production
(total tonnage)

Evolution of EU freshwater fish production
(reference year 1995: Index based on quantity produced)
Evolution of EU marine fish production (total tonnage)

Evolution of EU marine fish production (reference year 1995: Index based on quantity produced)